FIFTY YEARS IN NEW-YORK:

A SEMI-CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE

SOUTH DUTCH CHURCH,

BY J. M. MATHEWS, D. D.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY D. FANSHAW,
CORNER NASSAU AND ANN-STREETS.
1858.

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To Master W. N. Brady, U.S. Navy.

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Hon. Saml. L. Mitchell, LL.D. &c.

cum summa observ.

J. E. W.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW-YORK, 28th October, 1857.

REV. J. M. MATHEWS, D. D.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR:—There are few men who enjoy the high privilege of preaching the Gospel during an entire half century. This favor, in the good providence of God, has now been granted to you; and we, with many others, are desirous that it should be commemorated by a suitable discourse.

The last fifty years have been unusually prolific in incident and change, having important bearings on both the church and the world. You have been an observer of them all, and in some have taken an active part; and such a retrospect as you would furnish could not fail to be both instructive and interesting.

From none of your numerous friends could this suggestion come with more propriety than from us. We are the pastors of the only two churches with which your ministerial life has been connected, and your relation to each of us may be deemed peculiar. One of us grew up to manhood under your pastoral care, and afterwards became your colleague. To the other you have been a predecessor in his parochial charge, and your family are now his parishioners. Should you comply with our request, it would afford great pleasure, both to ourselves and our Consistories, to place either of our churches at your disposal for the occasion. We remain with great respect,

Yours in the Gospel,

M. S. HUTTON,

JOHN M. MACAULEY.

NEW-YORK, 11th November, 1857.

DEAR BRETHREN:—I have received your kind note of the 28th ult., requesting me to deliver a discourse suited to the occasion of my having now been a preacher of the Gospel during fifty years. I will have much pleasure in complying with your suggestion. Although for some time past occupied in labors more adapted to advanced age than the multifarious duties of a parochial charge, I still retain a deep interest in those to whom I once stood in the relation of a pastor. If but a few of my early contemporaries yet survive, their sons and daughters are still with us; and I hope it will be for our pleasure and profit to meet each other once more in the house of God, and unite in calling to our remembrance "the years of the right hand of the Most High."

I am at present suffering from one of those affections which, of late years, sometimes render public speaking difficult and painful to me; but I hope soon to be so far recovered as to be able to undertake the proposed service, at which I am gratified to know that I may expect your assistance.

With my earnest prayer for a blessing on yourselves, your families, and your churches, I am

Very truly yours,

J. M. MATHEWS.

To DRS. M. S. HUTTON AND JOHN M. MACAULEY.

NEW-YORK, December 21st, 1857.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :—

We listened yesterday with great pleasure to your semi-centennial discourse, and we are sure that we represent the wishes of the large assembly who heard it, when we ask the favor of a copy for publication. It contains many things which must be valuable and suggestive to all Christians; and to those who had formerly the privilege of being under your ministry, it will be a precious memorial of the days which they can never call to mind without thankfulness and praise.

With high respect, we are yours, etc.

M. S. HUTTON,
JOHN M. MACAULEY.

NEW-YORK, December 23d, 1857.

DEAR BRETHREN :—

I readily comply with your request to place at your disposal a copy of my discourse delivered last Sabbath morning. It has been suggested that the proceeds of the publication be devoted to the cause of our Foreign Missions. The proposal has my cordial approbation.

Very truly yours,

J. M. MATHEWS.

DISCOURSE.

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."—*Deuteronomy*, 32:7.

"I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands."—*Psalm* 143:5.

There are times in every man's life, whatever be his station or pursuits, which call him to look back; times when in his journey towards the grave, he may take such a retrospect of years past as should tend to prepare him for eternity that is coming. But when a minister of the Gospel has been spared to "preach Christ and Him crucified" through half a century; when he stands alone, and has for years stood alone, the only survivor of those who, in a vast city like this, entered the ministry either with him, or before him; when he has witnessed changes passing around him both in the land and in the church by which "a little one has become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation;" and if he has been allowed during all this time to put his hand to the Ark of the Covenant, and to have

a share, however humble, in carrying it forward to the conquests it has gained; he would show himself greatly wanting in a right spirit, if he did not carefully review past mercies, and erect his Ebenezer, with the confession, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped." It will add to his pleasure, also, if he can raise this memorial in the presence of those, or of their children, among whom his life has been chiefly spent, and whom he has aimed to guide in the ways of righteousness.

Such an occasion presents itself to me this day. Fifty years have now passed since, in the great kindness of God, I became a preacher of the Gospel; and this church, together with that which sprung from it, as a daughter from a mother, has been my only parochial charge. I cordially greet you, dear brethren, on seeing so many of you once more assembled before me in God's house; repeating to you the words of salutation which you have so often heard from my lips—"Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." And now that we are together in greater numbers than we can well hope to meet again on this side of eternity, let us join with the Psalmist

saying, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands." In a spirit like his, let us take a review of such works of God's hand which have transpired within the last fifty years, as may be most obvious and striking; adding reflections, as we proceed, that may be deemed applicable to our several duties.

It is a distinguishing feature of the Divine wisdom and goodness, that God always makes adequate and obvious preparation for the accomplishment of His purposes. The bud and the blossom come before the ripe fruit on the tree. The fertilizing shower and the warm sun bring on the rich harvest. And when God is about to enlarge His Church, He so prepares the way for it, that His people may understand both what He is about to do for them, and what He requires them to do for Him as the work of their day.

This is plainly a great distinction of the last fifty years. Viewed as a distinct age in the history of the world, we shall find them signally marked as an age of *preparation*. As they have passed away, one after another, we have still heard the voice of the Baptist

coming up louder and louder, not only from one circumscribed wilderness, but from every land and every sea, "saying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight;" and events have followed events so closely as almost to tread upon each other, all pointing the same way, all combining to show that the time is at hand when the Redeemer will establish His kingdom over the whole earth, revealing His Church in the brightness of her millennial glory. The signals by which this promised consummation is to be heralded into our world, are very plainly written in that "sure word of prophecy to which" we are told that "we do well to take heed." Let us then briefly note one or two predictions that seem to bear upon some of the more prominent signs of the times, to which we attribute an aspect so significant and auspicious.

"Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown"—"I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it him." In this strong language, the prophet marks out a rapid succession of revolutions among the kingdoms of the earth as both preparatory to

the Redeemer's reign, and as a sure sign of its approach. And what have we seen during the last fifty years in the political world? Pass your hand over the map whether of Europe or Asia, and everywhere you see the traces of change. Kingdoms and empires that seemed stable as the hills, have been rocked and convulsed, as if by the throes of an earthquake; and crowns have passed and are still passing from hand to hand, as if yet in search of their rightful owners.

Thus merely touching on this point, let us turn to the prediction in which we are told, that as a sign and a means of the Redeemer's reign, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased;" in other words, the prophet foretells that human intercourse shall be with distinguished speed and frequency, and that at the same time, knowledge shall be widely diffused, and its limits greatly enlarged. And what do we see brought about in this respect? Compare the present condition of the world, as to the spread of knowledge, with what it was fifty years ago, and the difference is wonderful. Even in nations the most enlightened, a dark cloud of ignorance was found resting upon

the masses of the people; and to these later days belongs the credit of having called into being and activity the Public Free School, and what is better still, the Sunday School, giving the child of the humblest member of the human family that inestimable attainment, the ability to read. But readers must have books: and look at the Press, that engine of light, designed to do for the intellectual world what the sun in the heavens does in the material. From the day of its invention it created a new era in the history of knowledge. Its achievements at first were deemed so marvelous, that the inventor had well nigh been put to death for necromancy, for having accomplished what was then regarded as beyond human power or skill in the speedy production of the printed sheet. But compare what the press did then, with what it is doing now, and has been brought to do chiefly within the last thirty or forty years, and how tardy and snail-like seem its movements in its earlier days! It is now performing feats, at which formerly, even magic would have stood aghast. Science and art have combined to roll it on by a nicely adjusted machinery, until it has covered our world with truth

as the earth is covered with the strewed leaves of Autumn, until every reader can have his book, and best of all, that book may be his Bible.

But if in this wider diffusion of knowledge, we see a getting ready for that promised day of the Redeemer's reign, when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold as the light of seven days;" equally significant do we find that enlargement of the limits of knowledge by the labors of the learned, which is also characteristic of our times. Every scholar well knows, that during the past fifty years, science has brought to light, laws and powers of nature that former generations never dreamed of in their philosophy; and here is a thought which, in this connection, should be carefully weighed. Whatever may have been accomplished of late by the giant strides of intellect, there is one great feature belonging more or less to the most important of them. It is, their bearing on that achievement described by the Prophet in the words, "Many shall run to and fro,"—referring, as we have said, to the increased facility and frequency of intercourse between man and man, between na-

tion and nation, between continent and continent, which is a characteristic exploit of the present generation. In the beginning of the present century, a voyage across the Atlantic often required months. Now it is accomplished in little more than a week. A journey of a hundred miles on land was the laborious work of two days. Now it can be compassed in as many hours. A message by express from New-York to Washington was a wonderful specimen of speed if carried through in twelve hours. Now it can be transmitted from New-York to Washington, to New-Orleans, or wherever you will go on our continent, in less than half that number of minutes; and the same electric spark that now passes along the wires on land, is soon to be sent across oceans, bringing not only London and Paris, but Calcutta and Canton into hourly intercourse with us here, as we sit at our tables or our desks! The propitious effect of all this on the attainments of our whole race, no one can fail to see. Mind is always made prolific, and gains strength, by contact with mind. What then must be the result, when the minds of a whole world shall thus be put into unceasing communion,

constantly creating in each other new impulses and new materials of thought; every parent conception that is struck out in America, or England, or France, or India, or China, at once sent abroad to every region of our globe as the common property of all, to be improved and moulded anew, while yet in its freshness; and then to be given back in its improved form to those from whom it came at first? Nor is this all. We have seen but the beginning of the end. The electric fluid, as a means of communication, is but in the rudiments of its education. What it has done, is simply the pledge of what it is to do; and, while knowledge in all the great interests of man, whether social, civil, or intellectual, is yet to spread through the telegraph to an extent far beyond what we see now, let it be remembered, that the messages on the wires shall not always be confined to the business of the Exchange, to wars and rumors of wars, to the movements of armies, to the decrees of cabinets, to the discoveries of science. The glad tidings of salvation, as we confidently believe, are yet to be found speeding their way upon the telegraph, whether carried across mountains or over seas, till

earth, air, and ocean shall together breathe that name which is above every name; and thus in a new sense will the prediction be fulfilled, that "As the lightning which lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in His day."

But if we see this preparation going on in the creation of new means of spreading knowledge, and in the enlargement of knowledge itself, we can see the way farther prepared in the religious condition of the world at the present day. Fifty years ago, obstacles to the progress of true religion seemed rooted so deeply in their strength, as to defy an overthrow. Rome sat like an incubus on the heart of Europe. Now her hold on nations that once bowed to her in abject submission, is relaxed and feeble, until she retains but a precarious existence on her own seven hills; and her recent efforts to regain what she has lost, are more like the spasms that indicate the approach of death, than like the vigorous action of enduring health and life. The Mohammedan delusion seemed impregnably intrenched in an empire that had been foretold as

spreading its conquests by horsemen having "breast-plates of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone," and by whom "the third part of men were slain." That once-dreaded empire is now become the shadow of a shade. The Turk himself appears to lose faith in his religion as he loses the possession of power; and in the holy places once inhabited by prophets and apostles, where the iron heel of the Mohammedan seemed to have crushed out Christianity, its sacred fires are rekindled, every year growing brighter and stronger. Fifty years ago, the wide domain of Paganism was comparatively undisturbed. Africa was all but given up in despair. Her sable millions were imprisoned in a cordon which made it death to the white man who ventured to cross it. India was enslaved under the bondage of caste, and gloried in the bloody rites of her Juggernaut; and, ashamed as we are to say it, her idolatries were sustained and countenanced by the Christian nation which had subjugated her swarming population to its sceptre. China suffered no breach in the wall within which she proudly immured herself, and thus shut out from her dying millions the light of the Gospel.

Now what do we see? Everywhere in the Pagan world, north, south, east, and west, ready access is allowed to the heralds of the cross, and the work of turning the nations to Christ is begun, although it is but a beginning. "Ethiopia stretches out her hands to God." India, although recently baptized in the blood of her martyrs, will find the blood of her martyrs the seed of the Church; and the policy of her conquerors in giving countenance to her idolatries, now proved to be unwise as it is wicked, we may hope to see changed, and yielding aid to the cause of Christianity. China, so besotted in pride and ignorance that she was long looked upon as the last stronghold of Paganism that could be subdued to the humbling faith of the Gospel, even she has of late not only had her national pride battered down by the arms of her invaders, and undermined by insurgents within her own walls; but her whole coast is already fringed with the morning light of the Gospel, as it seeks to enter in and pervade her darkened empire.

And while these nascent triumphs of Christianity are to be chronicled as the work of the last fifty years, there is still another change to be mentioned

which gives significance and promise to all the rest. At the commencement of the present century, Protestant Christendom, almost without exception, had sunk into a deep and guilty sleep. The loud wail of nations "sitting in the region of death," had fallen on her ears age after age, and yet how few among the churches could be awakened to a sense of their duty to a world perishing in sin. Here and there, as in the case of the humble but devoted Moravians, there might have been found a few faithful disciples who remembered and obeyed the Saviour's parting injunction, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." But their efforts were so inadequate to the work to be done, that they seemed rather a reproach to Christians at home, than a ground of hope to the heathen abroad. Twenty thousand dollars has been estimated as the amount then annually contributed by Christians in both England and America for the spread of the Gospel in "the dark places of the earth." The annual contribution from the two countries for this great purpose now is supposed to be more than seven millions; and as a new festival in the appointments of the

Church, at which these offerings are to be recorded, we have that bright epoch in every year, our Anniversary Week,—a week already stretching itself beyond seven days, calling out in succession our National Bible and Tract Societies, our Home and Foreign Missionary Institutions, our Sunday School and Seamen's Friend Societies, following each other, as various cohorts of a vast and well-appointed army, passing in review on their march to subdue a whole world to the sceptre of the Redeemer. These are the creation of times within our own memory, called into being by a new baptism of love to perishing souls poured out upon Christians. And see how widely this baptism has spread. The trumpet-toned command, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" has roused to activity Christians in every land, and of every name. If not acting in institutions which unite the strength of many in one object, every denomination is unfurling its banner in the common warfare for the triumphs of the cross. The great heart of the whole Church is touched and opened. Offerings to the cross of Christ, from old and young, from rich and poor, are multiplied year after year;

and instead of the few ambassadors for Christ that could scarcely be persuaded to go abroad on missions to the heathen, men in the prime of life, and of brilliant minds and ardent hearts, are yearly pressing themselves on the churches with the offer, "Here am I, send me."

These are "glorious things which are spoken of the City of God." They are signs of the times not to be mistaken. With even the bird's-eye view of them to which we are constrained at present to confine ourselves, we see in them the breaking of a day, such as earth never yet saw. Can you be surprised, beloved brethren, that having through a long life watched these growing indications of God's hand, my heart should now be filled with high hopes for the future? We have the word of promise, that "according to this time it shall be said, What had God wrought!" Such a glorious and full preparation must lead to a corresponding consummation; and as the one embraces every tribe and kingdom of our earth, so will the other. There may be occasional reactions or occasional interruptions to the progress of the work; but the glorious result is sure, and its near approach

is sure. In this faith I live, and in this faith I hope to die; going down to the grave not sorrowing, but rejoicing in view of the wide triumphs that are soon to crown our Redeemer "Lord of all."

Let me invite you, Christian hearers, let me invite old and young, to join me in this heart-expanding confidence. It will tend to make the old forget the infirmities of age, and to make the young feel strong in our Master's strength. Let our minds be filled with the elevating views to which these signals of the future lead, and we may all stand on the top of a new Pisgah which affords a wider and brighter range of vision than even Moses enjoyed, when he looked on the land of Canaan spread before him as the promised inheritance of Israel. Our land of promise is not Canaan alone, but the whole earth from pole to pole. We claim it all, as an inheritance to be subdued and possessed by the followers and worshipers of the Lamb; and as we have now aimed to show you, the way is prepared for achieving the conquest. "The pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night," beckons us onward. "Jordan is driven back, and the waters stand up as an heap," making the way

clear and safe to pass on. Nothing is wanted but that "the tribes of the Lord go up, the tribes of the Lord go up," and take possession in the name of Him who is both King of nations and King of saints.

Christian brethren, are you ready for this service, and does your zeal in it increase with increasing opportunity? You will bear me witness that you are not strangers to appeals on this subject; nor have you left me to lament that my appeals have been in vain. It is one of my pleasing memories of your past history as a people, that you led the way in giving encouragement and support to our beloved ABEEL, as I still love to call him, when he formed his holy purpose to be a pioneer in the great work of bringing China to the knowledge of Christ; and when I hear of the rich harvest now reaped from the seed sown by his hand, I rejoice in it the more, when I think of the melting occasion on which he was set apart to his mission in the South Church. Let no man, dear brethren, take your crown. In your prayers, your labors, and your offerings for the conversion of the world, strive to be among the first in coming up "to the help of the

Lord against the mighty." It is the work of your day, and as such He calls you to it. This is no time for idlers or sluggards in the hosts of Israel. The Master is coming with "his fan in his hand," and he will use it till He has "thoroughly purged his floor." He is even now beginning to separate the precious from the vile, the active from the idle in his church. If you are to hold a place among his followers, you must be up and doing; you must lay yourselves out for the cause of God and of a lost world. "He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Even so, come Lord Jesus."

But suitable as these views may be to the present occasion, I will not forget that I am expected to dwell chiefly on points that have a more immediate connection with home, with our own city, and with our own church, together with churches around us. I now come to this.

No wonder that New-York should be a place of deep interest to me. It has been the scene of my public labors ever since I entered public life; and, so far as I know, it has fallen to my lot to be the only preacher of the Gospel who has at any time

spent fifty consecutive years, having this city from first to last as his home, and the field of his official service. Here I began, and here I am likely to close my career as an ambassador for Christ; and when we compare New-York as it was fifty years ago, with what it is now, we seem "like them that dream," it is so difficult to realize the truth of the case. Including Brooklyn, then a small village, our population was not far from ninety thousand. Now it is fast approaching a million. Then, if a man lived above the City Hospital, he was viewed as far up town. Now, if he lives south of Union Square, he is viewed as somewhat down town. I have often gone past the district where we now are worshiping, then quite in the country, seeing it covered with brambles and rocks as if no one cared to reclaim it, or disfigured by hovels unfit to be dwellings for man. To-day it is covered and surrounded with palaces that render it the choice part of our city. And as for the men who then stood among the highest of our citizens in fame, wealth, or power, men of mark, who of them all is now left? Our bar and our bench, our physicians and our merchants, could show men of high attain-

ments and high character, well known both at home and abroad; and who impressed on our city in the greenness of its youth, the broad lineaments of commercial and professional energy and enterprise which still belong to her. But they are now all gone. Not a star of the constellation is left which then sparkled in our Courts or on our Exchange. Their place knows them no more; in one sense, indeed, their memorial has perished with them. The Tontine itself is gone. The old City Hall, notwithstanding its sacred associations with early events in the history of the nation, has been razed to its foundations. Perhaps most of those now before me scarce know where these time-honored edifices stood, so ruthless and reckless has been the hand of modern improvement in demolishing the monuments of past times. But whatever goes or is forgotten, these princely fathers of our city should be held in unfading remembrance. Some of them had been trained during their earlier days in the school of the American Revolution, that best of all schools which the nation ever saw, for bringing out great worth if it was in the man, and for showing his want of it, if it was not there.

But while I pay this merited respect to those who have won the civic honors of New-York, I must not be too long diverted from a survey of the religious interests of our city, and the men who have adorned her Gospel ministry. The question has often been asked, Is the pulpit of New-York what it was fifty years ago? Has it changed, and if so, in what respects? That a change has taken place is not to be denied; and yet, much as I respect the Gamaliels at whose feet I have accounted it a privilege to sit, I would be far from admitting that the change is entirely for the worse. I do not wish to be numbered with those who, in their blind reverence for antiquity, speak as if the world might as well come to an end, because our fathers are laid in their graves. Solomon has cautioned us, "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days are better than these, for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." We should remember that every age in the Church has its appropriate work, and that the ministry given to her by her Divine Head, will be suited to the work which He has given her to do. "There are diversities of gifts," says Paul, while there is "the same spirit"

who bestows them wisely, according to the end they are to answer. There are periods when the Church is called especially to contend against some alarming heresy. Her Lord then qualifies her ministry with gifts peculiarly adapted to the vindication of His truth. There are times, again, when she needs a full measure of faith and of patience to carry her through scenes of martyrdom; or again, an enlarged zeal for spreading abroad the word of life to those who are perishing through lack of knowledge. He then anoints her ministry with a spirit which may best strengthen her to suffer, or arouse her to feel her responsibility as the light of the world, and to act accordingly.

And here, as I conceive, lies the chief feature of the change which the pulpit among us has undergone. If it has less of the hammer, it has more of the trumpet; if it shows less of the power to demolish error, and grind it into dust, it has more of the spirit-stirring tone that excites the zeal of the Christian to deeds of high enterprise for the spread of his Saviour's kingdom. I would be far indeed from saying that the ministry of former days were insensible to the claims of the pagan world; but

still the great burden of their message was the vindication of sound doctrine. Nor would I admit for a moment that the ministry of the present day is insensible to the importance of doctrinal truth, or has not shown at times full ability to maintain it; but still the great burden of their message is to arouse the churches to the duty of spreading the Gospel. And well will it be for us, if we are found to have done our work as faithfully as our fathers did theirs. They were able men, contending earnestly for "the faith once delivered to the saints;" "scribes well instructed in the kingdom of heaven," "rightly dividing the word of truth." I love to recall them to memory as they once passed before us in our streets and in our sanctuaries. There was the aged RODGERS, just sinking into his grave, full of days and honors, his memory revered far as he was known. There was the venerable LIVINGSTON, with his lofty stature, distinguished by his kind paternal look, that seemed as if he would love to embrace as his children, Christians of every name and clime. I can see the winning ABEEL passing along with a benevolent expression in every feature of his face, as if he would have scanned every one

he met, to discern some means of doing them good. We had also the devout Moore, exhibiting in his daily walk and in his public ministrations a large measure of that spirit of seriousness which befits the man of God; and with him was the ever-active Hobart, spending his strength and life without stint in whatever he viewed as service to the Church. There was the bland-mannered Miller, showing how happily the refinement of the gentleman can be combined with the fidelity of the Gospel minister. I can recall to my vivid recollection the fearless Mason, with his powerful mind and stately form, ready at any moment to do battle for the cause of his Master against wickedness of every hue and shape. And then there was the indomitable McLeod, with his massive strength. I can see him in the pulpit, assailing error with the force and courage of a man who seemed to concentrate in himself the spirit of more than one of the chieftains from whom he was descended. I have seen all these noble warriors for the truth, with their equally noble compeers whom I have not time to name, I have seen them all laid in their graves, but not till their work was done, and well done.

They laid the foundations of a sound and intelligent Christianity firm and deep in the public mind; and to them, under God, do we mainly owe it, that our city is so generally named and known throughout our land as a great citadel of evangelical religion.

And yet let not this retrospect lead us to forget ourselves, or to neglect our own appropriate duties. They are of vast importance both to ourselves and to the world around us. We are inhabitants of a city fast becoming the metropolis, not only of our nation, but of our continent; and our example must be felt far and wide, either for good or for evil. Our geographical position on the habitable globe, giving us unequalled facilities of access to all nations of the earth; the central and radiating points on the map of paganism, where we have been led by the Most High to plant our missions and to unfurl the banner of the Cross; and though last not least, the spirit of irrepressible, indefatigable activity which belongs to us as a community and bids defiance to every obstacle which lies in its way, all go to point out the high place which the great Head of the church would allot to us in the

work of turning the nations to Himself. In view of such responsibilities, there is surely a call for anxiety and for increased fidelity to the cause of truth, whether we think of our own shortcomings, or the aspect which wickedness assumes in the midst of us. We are told that "Satan hath great wrath when he knoweth that he hath but a short time," and we should not fail to note the diligence and daring with which he is marshalling his hosts for a decisive encounter. An increased intensity in the power both of evil and good, is indeed a great distinction of our generation. We have evidence too strong to be either doubted or denied, that if the good among us are growing better, the bad are growing worse. Iniquity stalks abroad in new forms and more in open day. She is more shameless, hardened, and presumptuous. In times past, for instance, if any reputable man was found violating the holy Sabbath, he betrayed a sense of shame that made him anxious to escape observation. Now the Lord's day is violated openly and constantly, in our streets and our public places, by those who, far from being ashamed of their sin, seem rather to glory in their shame. And so of other forms

in which iniquity abounds; in most of them she puts on an increased air of defiance. But let her not deceive us; it is the mask to hide her despair, when she sees Christians awake to their duty. For what though "the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing, the Lord shall have them in derision, and will "set his King on his holy hill of Zion." This is the decree which he hath "declared," that his people may believe. Let Christians among us then go on in that far-reaching love to the souls of men, which we have described as one of the signs of our times; let them feel that whatever they have done is only a call to do more; let them "forget the things that are behind, and press forward to the things that are before," in devising larger plans, bestowing larger offerings, praying with more faith and perseverance, and we need no prophet to tell us what will be the issue of the present bitter controversy between light and darkness. And I bless God I have been permitted to live, until I have seen the bow of promise painted in the sky that is spread over this highly favored though guilty city. I see it in our multiplied schools and institutions of learning, providing fountains of knowledge for

both rich and poor. I see it in our multiplied places of worship, in which His Gospel is faithfully preached. I see it in a growing love among Christians one to another, and their more and more hearty co-operation in all good words and works. I see it in the higher scale on which Christians of our city are acting from year to year in their offerings and efforts to do good to the needy and the perishing whether at home or abroad; and I see it, too, where perhaps many would not expect to find it— I see it in the mercy that shines through the judgments we are now suffering. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth;" and when his people in the midst of us become worldly and selfish through a long course of prosperity, He in love rebukes their sin, by shaking our whole city as a forest is shaken by a mighty wind; causing us to see in blasted hopes and wrecked fortunes on every side, that the only treasure which can be laid up where moth and rust cannot corrupt, or thieves break through and steal, is that which we lay out for God.

Turn we now to our own Church, and look back on the way through which the Lord has led us as

a people. Few of you are acquainted with its origin and early history. Our first place of worship was in Garden Street, now Exchange Place. The building in which we worshipped had been erected, not because there was a want of religious accommodation for the inhabitants in the vicinity, but because the ground having been once set apart as the site of a church, the feeling of the times would not allow it to be used for any other purpose. But when the church was finished and dedicated, the first effort to collect a congregation proved a failure. Stores, even then, were encroaching on the dwellings in that part of the town, and the population constantly decreasing. At this juncture, a few gentlemen who had previously belonged to "The Collegiate Church," and who wished to have an organization and a pastor of their own, proposed that the building and the adjacent church grounds should be ceded to them for the purpose contemplated. This was ultimately done, and a new Consistory was organized. The success of the experiment, however, was much questioned. Few indeed could be induced to attach themselves to an enterprise where the result was thought so

doubtful; and when I was called to take charge of the church, there were but nineteen families to be considered as belonging to it; and at our first communion, the members who sat down to the Lord's table with the elders and deacons, all told, amounted to seventeen in number. With such small beginnings did we engage in the work of building up what had been for years a waste place in Zion.

It was my first parochial charge, the few former years of my public life having been chiefly occupied with the duties of a chair in the only Theological Seminary then in our city. But I willingly embarked in the service of the small congregation, when I understood the character of those who called me to it. Nor was I disappointed in the result.

The success was far beyond our deserts. Notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances of its location, the church was soon filled with a strong congregation. Members attached themselves to it, having large means and large hearts, soon putting its temporal welfare beyond the reach of peradventure.

But the chief glory of the church lay in its spiritual prosperity. If the members were few at the

beginning, it was a spark of the right fire that dwelt within them. It was a coal from the altar above. No credit belongs to me for having kindled it. It was there to meet me; and the spirit pervaded the women as well as the men, which was one of its best features. No church can rise to a full and happy growth unless she can count her Priscillas with her Aquilas, taking the part which befits their sex in spreading the influence of the Gospel. Of such Christian women this church had a large proportion from its infancy; and I believe it was greatly owing to their fidelity in their families as mothers in Israel, that so great a number of the young in the congregation were from year to year savingly converted to God in the morning of their days. So remarkably was this blessing bestowed at one period, that I will specially refer to it. We were allowed to share largely in the general revival of religion that spread through many churches of our city in 1832; and during that happy season, aged members of the congregation who had reached their threescore, and even threescore and ten years, were made subjects of the gracious work. But the harvest was chiefly among

the young; and so profusely was the Spirit poured out upon them, that in several instances every son and daughter in whole households, came forward and publicly professed the name of the Saviour. Nor have I yet told the whole story. Many of us at the time were often surprised by what at first we scarce knew how to explain. Young children, children five or six years old, were so baptized with the Holy Ghost as to remind us of the wonderful scene in the days of our Lord, when the children in His temple cried out their Hosannas to the Son of David. It was a spectacle that filled the heart of many a parent with both joy and wonder. We believed, nor could we do otherwise than believe, that "Christ was formed" in the hearts of these little ones, the "hope of glory;" and time afterwards showed how fully our belief was justified. Though not sufficiently advanced in years, as we judged, to warrant their open reception into the church on a confession of their faith, we were careful to watch their subsequent course. Some of them became examples of the saying, "early ripe and soon taken;" and of those who were spared to longer life, not one, so far as I can tell, no, not one can be

named who did not show that the grace bestowed on them in infancy, grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength, until they arrived at the stature of full-grown men in Christ Jesus. But where did we find these babes and sucklings, from whose mouths the Redeemer thus perfected his praise? They were the children of parents, especially of mothers, who with a mother's faith took a strong hold of the promise, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee," and whose faith in God's word was made perfect by works of parental faithfulness.

With me, as many of you know, this has long been a favorite and a tender topic—the fidelity of God to his promises on behalf of our children, when we are faithful to the duties we owe to Him and to them; and, in the language of Peter, "I think it meet, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." Let me then entreat fathers and mothers, by the recollection of these mercies granted in times past, that you watch for the early buddings of religion in the hearts of your young children, and see to it that they be not allowed to wither and die for the want of tender care and cultivation.

Much as it would please me to do it, I have not time to dwell farther on the measure of blessing you long enjoyed as a church; your "cords lengthened and your stakes strengthened" year after year; seals still given to the ministry, "brethren dwelling together in unity;" and in this state of peace and prosperity you were continued, till overtaken by an event painfully chronicled in the annals of our city. At the close of 1835, "our holy and beautiful house wherein our fathers worshipped was burnt with fire." In that wide conflagration, which rendered a large district of our city an utter ruin, much that appertained to our previous welfare appeared to have been consumed. Perhaps we had been too proud of the unity which distinguished us as a people, and deserved a rebuke for our self-complacency. For the first time we found ourselves divided in our councils. We were not of one mind on the question of where our church should be rebuilt. But if there were differences of opinion, it was between brethren who knew how to respect and to love each other; and we have lived to see that the overruling hand of God was in the thing which we deplored as a calamity. We all felt it to be a crisis in our condition. Our church was in

ashes. If the sheep were not without a shepherd, they had been driven from the fold. There was a strong and pervading desire that we should keep together as one church, and our early plans were formed with that view. But He who "sees the end from the beginning" did not allow us to have our own way, and His will is now seen to have been wisest and best. He so ordered our diversity of views, that two churches have arisen in the place of one, living in affectionate harmony with each other, both fully able to sustain His worship; and so far has he now enlarged them both, that eighteen hundred and ninety-four members have been added, chiefly on confession of their faith, to the small band of seventeen with whom the church first celebrated her Lord's death. Let all the praise be to Him who has, by His blessing, made His word thus instrumental of good.

The severance of the tie that once bound me to these churches as their Pastor, and my subsequent occupation in labors more adapted to advanced years than the details of parochial duty, have never severed the people from my heart. Were I to lose my interest in their welfare, or cease to pray for it,

I might well feel myself rebuked for the sin, by the spirits of friends and companions now in heaven, whose names are not only written in the Book of Life, but are too deeply engraven within my bosom ever to be forgotten. Not only when I enter the temples of worship where their smiles often greeted and cheered me in my public labors, but often in the silent watches of the night, my mind recalls the familiar faces of BENSON, BALDWIN, STORM, KEESE, NITCHIE, VROOM, HEYER, HUTTON, BOYD, STEWARD, with others who partook of their spirit; and while I can remember their wise counsels as rulers in the church, I seem at times even still to hear the melting tones in which some of them were wont to pour out their souls in prayer to God, for His blessing on their pastor, on the congregation, on our city, and the world. Sainted men! all hail to them in the heaven which has received them. They have now entered into the joy of their Lord. They have outstripped us in the race set before us, but not far nor long, as we hope. Yet a little while, dear brethren, and those of us who consulted and labored with them in the church below, may aspire to join them in the church above; and while uniting with

each other there, in the song of Moses and the Lamb, God grant we may still look back on these churches we have left behind us, and see the Sun of Righteousness shining on them both with a brightness and power never known in our day.

And now in the review of a life thus prolonged, and of labors thus kindly blessed, notwithstanding many sins and short-comings, what shall I say more? Let me then bear my testimony, in the

First place, to what I have found to be the source of success to the Gospel minister. If he would be "wise to win souls," he must preach a pure Gospel, must preach a Divine Saviour, a full Saviour, and a free Saviour; must preach "Christ and Him crucified," as "the way, the truth, and the life." He must teach men that they are lost, utterly lost in themselves, and yet that all may have life everlasting who will turn from themselves to the Redeemer as their only hope. He must show Christians that they are not their own, that they are "bought with a price," and that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Such must be his

message to sinners and to saints; and then, when he has faithfully delivered it, he must lie low at the feet of his Master, feeling that he himself is nothing, and all his labors nothing, unless they are accompanied by the power of Him "who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And I here bear record before you all, that if past experience as a minister of Christ teaches me anything, it is, that just according as these truths have flowed from my lips, and this spirit has dwelt in my heart, my ministry has done good to the souls of men. Let me also testify,—

Secondly, as to what I have seen to be the great source and token of prosperity in a church. It is not alone in a powerful or a faithful ministry, much as that may be valued. Was prophet ever more faithful and eloquent than he who lamented over the barrenness of his ministry in the words, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The means and the proof of prosperity in a church are found in a faithful attendance on God's ordinances; in a spirit of humble and persevering prayer for God's blessing upon them; in a spirit of tender, forbearing, and forgiving

love among its members, one towards another; in the holiness of their lives, "keeping themselves unspotted from the world;" and in a ready consecration of themselves and all that is theirs to the service of their Lord and Master. This is the prosperous church, the happy church, whether it embraces rich or poor in this world,—the church on which the Redeemer puts His seal, owning her "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And I here again bear record before you, as the result of observation during my whole life, that according as a church comes up to this standard of her duty, this completeness in Christ, she will not only walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, but "converts will be added to her as drops of dew in the morning." And once more let me testify,—

Thirdly, as to what I have seen to be the great secret of happiness and strength in the religion of the individual believer. He must carry with him a deep sense of the sinfulness of his nature, the deceitfulness of his heart, and of his daily transgressions against his God and Redeemer. He must be ever awake to the snares of the tempter and the

allurements of the world, and feel how little he is able to assist either by any strength or wisdom of his own. And under the consciousness of his guiltiness and his weakness, he must live with the prayer of the publican habitually on his lips, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and must cling to the Saviour as the Lord, his righteousness and his strength, in every trial that is laid upon him, and every duty required of him. This is the disciple that, like John, leans on Jesus' breast, the beloved disciple. If in youth, with the fervor of a young heart, he will consecrate his growing strength to the service of Him who has called him so early. If in the prime of his life, he will be prompt to go forth and employ his best powers, bearing the burden and heat of the day in his Master's vineyard. And "in old age when others fade," he will find that his foundation is sure, and that neither death nor the grave can sweep it away.

And in prospect of this "hope, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil," what else is worthy of our desire or pursuit as an abiding portion for man? Men and brethren, you have followed me this morning while I have shown you

how everything earthly is subject to change. We have seen nations change, we have seen our city change, we have seen fortunes change, and we see them changing now, till the rich man of to-day becomes the poor man of to-morrow. We have seen our churches change, we have seen our families change; and I have seen men and brethren around me change, till there is scarce a face left of those familiar to me in early years, and with whom I then mingled in my daily walks. But amidst all these changes, there is One who changes not; "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," the unchanging God. His love changes not, it is from everlasting to everlasting. His promises change not; they are faithful and true; and His heaven changes not. No, no; heaven, with its glories, abides for ever, the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," appointed for them who are chosen by Him in the fullness of His grace, and who choose Him with the fullness of devoted hearts. There, let me hope that I shall hereafter meet with all those to whom, in years past, or to whom this day I have testified of the grace of God. "Finally, brethren, farewell." And "now, unto

him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."